

Message Text

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63

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 DRC-01 /097 W

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R 022110Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7556

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 5759

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJECT: GOVT MOVES TO TAKE CONTROL OF TV STATIONS

1. THE GOA ANNOUNCED ON AUG 1 THAT IT WOULD, DURING THE NEXT 60 DAYS, EXERCISE "EFFECTIVE CONTROL" OVER TV STATIONS 9, 11 AND 13 IN BUENOS AIRES; CHANNEL 7 IN MAR DEL PLATA; AND CHANNEL 8 IN MENDOZA. DURING THIS 60-DAY PERIOD THE GOA WILL INVENTORY THE ASSETS OF THE STATIONS IN ATTEMPT TO NEGOTIATE A PURCHASE AGREEMENT WITH STATION OWNERS, AND "REVIEW THE ENTIRE TV SITUATION" WITH A VIEW TOWARD ESTABLISHING FUNDAMENTAL NEW POLICIES FOR TV BROADCASTING IN ARGENTINA. DESPITE THIS SWEEPING ANNOUNCEMENT THE GOVT MAINTAINS THAT THE FINAL POLICY DECISIONS ON TV WILL EMERGE FROM THE PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION BEING DEBATED IN CONGRESS. HOWEVER, LITTLE DOUBT REMAINS THAT THE GOA AT THIS POINT INTENDS TO HAVE STATIONS PASS TO GOVT OWNERSHIP.

2. PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARY ABRAS, WHO WILL EXERCISE THE GOA'S CONTROL OVER THE STATIONS, TOLD NEWSMEN THAT THE TAKEOVER OF THE STATIONS WOULD BE A MAJOR STEP TOWARD CULTURAL LIBERATION. ABRAS CLAIMED THAT UNDER STATE CONTROL THE FAILURE OF PRIVATE TV TO PLAY ITS PROPER ROLE IN THE CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL LIFE OF THE NATION WOULD BE CORRECTED. HE ADDED THAT THE PRESENT EMPLOYEES OF THE STATION WOULD NOT BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY THE CHANGEOVER AND THAT ALL POLITICAL PARTIES WILL

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BE GIVEN ACCESS TO THE MEDIA.

3. THE STATION OWNERS INDICATED YESTERDAY THAT THEY WILL GO TO COURT IF THE GOA DID NOT COMPENSATE THEM FOR THEIR INTANGIBLE ASSETS. THIS, GIVEN RECENT INDEPENDENCE OF SOME JUDGES ON SENSITIVE ISSUES, MAY BE THEIR BEST HOPE OF SECURING FAIR PRICE.

4. COMMENT: WITH YESTERDAY'S ANNOUNCEMENT THE FOCUS OF ACTION NOW WILL SHIFT TO CONGRESS. WHILE THE GOVT WILL UNDOUBTEDLY GET THE BILL IT SEEKS, FURTHER HEAVY-HANDEDNESS ON THIS ISSUE WILL BE COSTLY IN TERMS OF MAINTAINING A DIALOGUE POLICY WITH THE UCR. IT HAS ALREADY TAKEN TOLL. UCR SENATOR FERNANDO DE LA RUA TOLD EMBOFF AUG 2 THAT IN UCR VIEW LOPEZ REGA IS FORCING THE SALE OF THE STATIONS IN ORDER TO BY-PASS PERON'S COMMITMENT TO SETTLE MATTER IN CONGRESS. HE DESCRIBED GOVT'S STATEMENT THAT FINAL POLICY WILL BE DECIDED IN CONGRESS AS SHEER HYOCRISY.
HILL

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